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# THE UNITED STATES AT THE PARIS EXPOSITION IN 1900.

BY FERDINAND W. PECK, COMMISSIONER-GENERAL FOR THE  
UNITED STATES TO THE PARIS EXPOSITION OF 1900.

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By their efforts to surpass each other in the magnificence of their displays, foreign countries will obtain for the French the realization of their prophecy that the Paris Exposition of 1900 will be the climax of exposition achievements.

The nineteenth century has been notable for its unparalleled progress, and to secure the greatest credit for assisting in this upward sweep, and to obtain the emoluments which will come from a fine display, more than fifty nations will be present at the exposition, arrayed in the best they can produce. They will not spare money to secure the best effects, and will follow the French in adopting "quality, not quantity," as the motto by which they will select their exhibits. It is therefore assured that the best crystallized ideals of all nations will be displayed in the exhibits and their installation, and that the exposition in every particular will be of unsurpassed grandeur and perfection.

The spot chosen for the exposition is in the heart of Paris, on the site already made historical by four international expositions. The beautiful Seine winds its way through it, and magnificent boulevards with stately edifices and monuments surround and traverse it. The entire city of Paris is to be greatly beautified by additional parks and gardens, so that in 1900 it will have still a greater charm than now, and serve as an appropriate setting to the brilliant exposition.

The passing of the old century and the greeting of the new will take to Paris the people of leisure and the pleasure seekers of every clime. The wealthy, the purchasing agents, the scientists

and experts, representing at least five hundred million people, will be present. This large attendance and the superb exhibits which our chief commercial competitors will present at the exposition, render it obligatory on the United States to use every endeavor to make a display of every natural and manufactured product that will equal that from any other land. It will be the opportunity of the age to show the peoples of every country, through their thousands of representatives present, the actual superiority of American goods, of which even Americans do not know, and of which foreigners have not learned, and cannot learn, unless it is demonstrated to them by placing the goods before their eyes in competition with those of other countries.

Whatever is done to extend American trade is certain to exert a beneficial influence on the general prosperity of the country. Prosaic as trade may be, it is to-day the keynote of international politics. The armies and navies of the world exist but for the purpose of aiding the merchants and manufacturers in their struggle for this extension. Behind the pioneers who blazon their way through hitherto unconquered territory, go the merchants who buy and sell. The victory of Dewey at Manila is recognized as the presage of trade with the Philippines, which will mean dollars and cents in the pockets of the American people. European nations are now armed to the teeth facing each other in Asia, merely to seize trade advantages: The markets of the world are the prizes for which they are constantly contending.

The United States, however, is not compelled to resort to force to obtain trade extensions; it has the advantage of being able to meet and vanquish its competitors in their own home markets, while in many cases they are forced to find colonies whose markets they can only hold by establishing a monopoly. This country is the leading nation of the world in industry, but it has not won for itself the place it should hold in commerce. The eminent statistician, Mulhall, says:

"The United States leads in agriculture, with products greater than Russia and the United Kingdom combined; in manufactures with a product greater than the aggregate output of the factories of the United Kingdom, France, Austria-Hungary and Belgium combined; in machinery with a steam power greater than the United Kingdom, Austria-Hungary and Italy combined; in mining, with a product greater than the United Kingdom and France combined (or nearly one-third that of the entire world); in railway transportation, with a mileage forty per cent. greater than that of all

Europe; in forestry, with products greater than that of all Europe and nearly one-half of the total products of the world; in fisheries, with a greater product than the United Kingdom, Russia and Germany combined."

From the same authority we learn that the United States is \$20,000,000,000 richer than Great Britain; yet that kingdom, with one-thirtieth the area and a little more than one-half the population of the United States, enjoys double our foreign trade. Even Germany, which is scarcely to be compared with the United States in any branch of industry, in 1895 had a greater foreign trade. These facts are positively discreditable to the United States and challenge the attention of our statesmen. Commerce is the one thing that has made Great Britain great, and it is the important factor of public wealth.

The growth of the United States during recent years has clearly proven that its commerce is capable of material increase. The exports *per capita* have grown from \$11.37 in 1895 to \$12.11 in 1896, and \$14.17 in 1897. The exports of manufactured products have been quite as striking in their growth. In proportion to the percentage of total exports, the exports of manufactures have been 15.61 in 1892, 19.02 in 1893, 21.14 in 1894, 23.14 in 1895, 26.48 in 1896 and 26.87 in 1897.

These figures are gratifying, yet they by no means represent the full possibilities of American enterprise. In the exports of the other great commercial nations finished products represent a far greater proportion as compared with raw materials, and the United States should be able to keep pace with them without any diminution in agricultural exports. While the United States produces fifty per cent. more hardware than Great Britain, we export less than one-third as much. Instances of the same sort might be multiplied.

The United States has secured only one-seventh of the exports that go to the countries of Australasia and Asia, with a population of 852,000,000—a little more than one-half of the population of the world—while this country should have one-third of the commerce that goes to this immense field. This is but one illustration to show our trade relations to the rest of the world.

The extensive foreign trade it does enjoy has come almost wholly unsolicited, the producers of the United States having been occupied in filling the wants of home demands. But its production is beginning to vastly exceed its consumption, and it

must go abroad for commerce and take advantage of every agency to secure it.

Mr. Worthington C. Ford, Chief of the Bureau of Statistics in the Treasury Department, has compiled tables which prove conclusively that the international expositions in which the United States has been interested have had an important and direct effect in increasing its exports. Prior to 1876, the year of the Centennial Exposition, the balance of trade had been against the United States to the amount of \$2,236,406,610. In the preceding eighty-seven years the United States witnessed but sixteen annual balances of trade in its favor. After the exposition the tide turned in favor of this country, and in the twenty-three years since then it has witnessed but three occasions when the annual balance of trade has been against it. Prior to 1876 the exports amounted to \$12,309,653,384, an average of about \$141,000,000 per annum, while the imports amounted to \$14,546,994,000, an average of about \$167,000,000 per annum. Since 1876 the exports have amounted to \$18,662,344,445, an average of about \$811,000,000 per annum, and the imports amounted to \$15,570,903,493, an average of about \$677,000,000 per annum. It will be seen that in this period our exports have been more than fifty per cent. in excess of the entire eighty-seven years before the exposition, and that the average annual exportation has been nearly six times the annual exportation prior to that time.

Not only was the continuance of this increase aided by the Columbian Exposition at Chicago in 1893, but American participation at the Paris Expositions of 1878 and 1889 was followed by a material increase of exports.

It is a well-known fact that more American firms have been able to form connections abroad and extend their foreign trade since 1893 than ever before, and to the Columbian Exposition might easily be traced the beginning of negotiations which have led to the closing of many recent large orders for American goods.

The Consular Reports compiled by Frederick B. Emory, Director of the Bureau of American Commerce, contain many letters that are almost pathetic in their appeals to American merchants to take advantage of the rich trade opportunities which they permit to pass neglected, and which other more enterprising nations have improved.

Carl Bailey Hurst, United States Consul-General at Vienna, in a letter to the State Department says:

"Everywhere in Europe there is a constantly increasing demand for what are termed "American Goods;" that is, goods made in the United States. In the first place, everything manufactured in the United States is so neatly and trimly made that it at once catches the eye of a foreigner. In the next place the American article is honestly made, and therefore it can stand the closest scrutiny and the test of use.

"It is noticeable that, if Europeans come into possession of an article of American manufacture, they are always proud of it and quick to exhibit it on all occasions, and they are not slow to let the fact be known that it was made in America. They acknowledge the superiority of the American goods every time."

In another report he shows how American glass wins recognition even in Austria, a country noted for its glassware.

"It is frankly admitted here that the American cut-glass is finer, and more elegantly cut than any manufactured on the continent of Europe, or even in England. This matter, it is said, is being taken seriously by the manufacturers here, who are already beginning to look elsewhere for a market for their goods. The same is true of plate glass, looking-glass plates etc. Heretofore manufacturers and exporters in Central Europe have done a large and lucrative business in this line with the United States, that country affording them their best market, but many of the factories are now closed, or are running on half or quarter time and the plants can be bought for fifty per cent. of the amount they would have brought six or seven years ago."

Reports of a similar nature come from France. Walter P. Griffin, Commercial Agent at Limoges, says that there is a great demand for American agricultural machinery of every kind, as well as for sewing machines. He further says:

"There is probably no tool employed by the American artisans, carpenters, masons, plumbers, lock-smiths, woodworkers, etc., that could not find a ready and profitable sale in France. As these goods are less bulky than, and different in shape from, the French ones, they must be shown, and their excellence proven to the workmen before their superiority is realized.

"There is also an undoubted demand for good cooking stoves and ranges."

Continuing, Mr. Griffin tells of many other American manufactured articles which the French would buy, if the opportunity were offered them.

Frank H. Mason, United States Consul-General at Frankfort, tells of the demand for American leather goods, particularly shoes. He writes:

"The statement is here reiterated, upon the judgment of competent experts, that in every important German city, or large town, there could be established, with practical certainty of success, an American shoe-store. American shoes are offered here as a costly luxury, while it is a fact that

good factory-made boots and shoes are cheaper, quality considered, in the United States, than anywhere else in the world. American lumber and furniture is reported as in good demand, and there should be in Germany a far more extensive market for American mechanics' tools that has yet been developed."

The same story is told everywhere of the demand for American-made goods, but these goods must be shown, and their points of excellence made evident, in order to awaken the natives to a proper appreciation of their advantages. The Consuls, almost without exception, urge that commercial travellers be sent abroad and samples exhibited. It would be futile to expect the natives to buy unless this is done.

"If our manufacturers and business men are desirous of extending their foreign trade, it is indispensable that they deal with it in a proper way," writes Herbert de Castro, United States Consul-General at Rome. "They must do preliminary or missionary work. The merchants and importers of this country will not come to us unless we go to them first, and educate them to the use of our products. Some of our intelligent commercial travelers, supplied with adequate samples, would accomplish more in one month than letters and circulars could in years. The method may be somewhat expensive in the beginning, but the final results could not fail to be gratifying.

"Should our business men pay as much attention to this part of Europe as they have, for instance, to Mexico and some of the South American countries, they would soon reap the benefit of their enterprise. By following in the footsteps of the European exporters, they would soon learn to compete successfully with them. When American products are once introduced on these markets, and are well known and appreciated, they will not fail to command the preference on account of their superiority."

Such methods as are urged by the Consuls are expensive, but the Paris Exposition will offer a cheaper way to achieve the same results, as American goods will be placed side by side with those of European manufacture, for comparison. It will thus be unnecessary to establish warehouses, or salesrooms so extensively in the different countries, and this enormous expense will be entirely avoided. Although American goods will be exhibited only in Paris, and not in the many important cities of the various countries, the thousands of visitors and experts present from those countries will, upon their return home, disseminate the information there obtained of the superiority of our productions. The quality will thus receive the greatest publicity among the people of the different nations in the shortest possible space of time, and at the least possible expense. Besides the millions of Frenchmen, it is estimated that over two million foreigners will visit the exposition, and if the United States is well represented

in the exhibits, this army of visitors will be an army of commercial travellers who will go forth into every land and, in the language of that land, praise American goods. The advantages to accrue will be, not to the individual exhibitors only; other Americans engaged in the same industry will be benefited. It is not one particular make of shoes, or one particular manufacturer's furniture, that is demanded, but American-made shoes, and American-made furniture. It is the purpose of the Commissioner-General so to install this country's display that the benefits will accrue to the whole country.

While the prime motive of America's display will be the extension and expansion of her trade with foreign countries—and to accomplish that a creditable exhibit is necessary—it must be borne in mind that other nations are working to the same end, and will likewise use every effort to increase their individual trade, even at the expense of other countries, including the United States. They, too, will make magnificent displays, and to counteract their influence it is necessary that the United States should get together an exhibit that will truly represent the progress of this country, and the excellence of its products, as compared with the exhibits of other countries which will be placed side by side with them.

In the manufacture of agricultural implements alone, there is invested in the United States over \$500,000,000, and this industry gives employment to over 500,000 of America's best mechanics and brightest laboring men. Other branches of industry have proportionate capital invested, and employ a proportionate number of the men who form the sinew of this country as a nation. A loss of any of the foreign trade would mean a loss to this invested capital; it would throw many of these mechanics and workmen out of employment, and inflict a corresponding injury upon the prosperity of the country.

The President, in his recent annual message to Congress, with reference to the importance of the participation of the United States in the Paris Exposition of 1900, says:

"Where our artisans have the admitted capacity to excel, where our inventive genius has initiated many of the grandest discoveries of these later days of the century, and where the native resources of our land are as limitless as they are valuable to supply the world's needs, it is our province, as it should be our earnest care, to lead in the march of human progress and not rest content with any secondary place. Moreover, if this be due to our-



selves, it is no less due to the great French nation, whose guests we become, and which has in so many ways testified its wishes and hope that our participation shall befit the place the two peoples have won in the field of universal development."

The Paris Exposition of 1900 will occupy only about half as much ground as the Columbian Exposition at Chicago in 1893. France will occupy 55 per cent. of the covered area, and the United States will have no more than its proportion of the remaining 45 per cent. At Chicago the United States had 45 per cent. of the covered space in grounds extending over 720 acres.

Space equal to that obtained by any other country has been allotted to the United States in each of the twenty pavilions which will form the exposition proper; a site for a national building and areas for other buildings have also been granted. An opportunity will therefore be offered to show the diversity of the products of this country, and from the anxiety shown by manufacturers and producers to exhibit, it must be inferred that the character of the exhibits in every department will be inferior to none. The difficult problem will be to install them so as to produce the best effect, and obtain the best results.

Estimating his needs by what he had at the World's Columbian Exposition, nearly every manufacturer has asked for a reservation of space, which, if granted, would prevent his competitors from exhibiting. It is desired, however, that the greatest possible number of producers and manufacturers show their goods, so that the benefit from exhibiting may be most generally distributed, and that the United States may carry away the largest number of awards; by which European countries judge largely of the qualities of a nation's products.

That this may be done, it may be necessary for exhibitors to unite in collective exhibits which will bear a national character, preserving, at the same time, the individuality of the exhibitors. The collective national exhibits made by foreign countries at Chicago in 1893 were the most effective, as is well known, and as their Commissioners declare in their reports on the exposition.

The various national manufacturing associations realize the advantages to the whole trade and the country, which would follow such a policy, and have expressed their approval and desire to have it carried out as regards their respective industries.

The expense to the government of such exhibits will, however, be much greater than if everything were left to the judgment of individuals; the cost of the plans and installations must be more extensively borne, and additional experts must be employed. It is on account of this, the expense necessary to erect the national building, that the present appropriation of \$650,000 is inadequate, and that the expenditure of at least a million dollars will be necessary to enable the United States to make a display that will be in keeping with its rank as a commercial nation. A million dollars will not be an extravagant sum; it is the amount which Special Commissioner Handy deemed necessary, and is much less than the amount which other nations have arranged to expend in exploiting their industries at the exposition.

The classification of the exposition contains eighteen groups, which the French officials have united into eleven departments, so-called, a director being placed in charge of each to superintend personally the installation of exhibits. The Commissioner-General for the United States has selected a like number of chiefs who will act in similar capacity for this country. The men chosen are experts of national reputation in their respective lines; men whose names assure success in whatever they undertake.

Unlike past expositions, the coming one will have the raw material, the process of manufacture, and the finished products exhibited side by side, thereby giving to the different sections an added attractiveness by showing machinery in motion.

In every building and group it is expected that the United States will have some new invention or device so especially attractive that the American sections will prove the "*clou*" of the exposition, to provide which the officials are taxing themselves; and also be a revelation even to Americans.

The National Building will be an oasis where Americans may find Americans, and rest from the weariness of the sight of strangers.

The unveiling of the Lafayette monument, on July 4, will make United States Day the most conspicuously resplendent of national days.

The outlook for the United States at the exposition is excellent. The co-operation of manufacturers and producers, which is already assured, and the assistance of Congress through an addi-

tional appropriation, will enable us to make an exhibit in all lines that will be not only creditable, but conducive to still further prosperity.

The eyes of the world are now upon America, marvelling at its recent prowess upon the sea, and wondering what this Child of the West will do next. While this is so, every effort should be made to prove that, in the arts of peace, America is no less supreme than in the science of war. But this can no more be done without the expenditure of money than can victories of war be won. The increase of the present appropriation to one-half the sum that would be necessary to build one second-rate battleship, would be sufficient to assure a victory that would prove of vastly more benefit to the people of the United States than did the recent success of their arms.

FERDINAND W. PECK.